

*Samuel M. Garrett*

# THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

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## THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER<sup>1</sup>

By JAMES ARTHUR MULLER

THE Book of Common Prayer, as most Americans think of it, is the service book of the Episcopal Church. We are also aware that it, or a similar book, is used in the Church of England. Many of us are not aware that it is also used, in some cases with local variation, in the Episcopal Churches of Scotland, Ireland, Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, New Zealand, and the West Indies. It is the service book of the largest communion of English-speaking Christians in the world. It has also been translated into many other tongues for use in foreign congregations at home and for the growing churches in the mission field, notably in China and Japan, where the translation has involved adaptation to national needs. Outside the Anglican communion it has been the model on which the services of many churches have been conducted and the storehouse in which they have found their forms. The noted London Congregationalist, the Rev. W. E. Orchard, tells us that in the preparation of the service book which he has recently published for use in non-episcopal churches the Book of Common Prayer "has been so largely drawn upon that very few of its prayers have been left unused." When we turn to the American Methodist book of Discipline we find that when the Methodist Church uses liturgical forms, as in Baptism, Burial and the Holy Communion,

<sup>1</sup> A Lecture given at King's Chapel, Boston, March 10, 1924, being one of a series of Lowell Lectures by various authors on the Sources of Christian Liturgy.



they are taken largely from the Book of Common Prayer. Such instances give us some notion of the Christian and comprehensive spirit in which the book was conceived as well as of its transcendent literary and liturgical merit.

The first English Prayer Book appeared in 1549; the second, a revision of the first, in 1552. These two versions are known as the first and second Prayer Books of Edward VI, having both been issued in his reign. Just ten years after the first book came the third, in 1559, the year after the accession of Queen Elizabeth. In 1604, the year after the accession of James I, there was another revision, and in 1661, the year after the restoration of Charles II, still another. Although this was the last revision of the text of the English book, there was in 1872 a revision of the use of it. That is, permission was then given to shorten some of the services by the omission of certain of their parts, the services remaining otherwise unchanged. At the present moment, however, the text as well as the use of the book is again in process of revision.

Some years before the revision of 1661, namely in 1637, in the reign of Charles I and in the time of Archbishop Laud, a slightly variant form was issued for Scotland. The first use of this in Edinburgh caused a riot, and was not entirely unconnected with the ultimate loss of the heads of both Charles and Laud. The Stuart plan of Anglicizing the Scotch Presbyterians came to nothing; but the book was subsequently used by Scotch Episcopalians, passed through several revisions, and gave a part of its Communion Service to the American Prayer Book.

Before the establishment of independence, the Episcopal Churches in the American colonies naturally used the English Book, but in 1789, the year in which our national constitution was drafted, these churches organized into a

national body and adopted an American Prayer Book, which was a revision of the English Prayer Book of 1661, plus portions of the Scotch Communion Service.

This American Book was revised in 1892, and is at present undergoing still another revision. The changes adopted at the last General Convention, and those proposed for adoption at the next, can be examined in a booklet entitled "The Proposed Revision of the Book of Common Prayer," published in 1923. Scotland, South Africa, and Canada have all recently made revisions of the Book.

Thus we see that there has been a history of continuous growth and adaptation to changing conditions since the middle of the sixteenth century.

But the history of the Prayer Book did not by any means begin in the middle of the sixteenth century. If we are justified in saying that a book is as old as its parts, the Prayer Book is as old as the Latin Mass, as old as the earlier Greek liturgies, and, in its large use of the psalms, as old as the service of the pre-Christian synagogue.

It is as young as the Canadian revision of 1918, and the American revision which may be completed in 1925.

We find its immediate ancestry, with which we are here particularly concerned, in the medieval Latin services, which were, in the sixteenth century, translated, adapted to new needs, and reformed in order to accord more nearly with primitive and biblical Christianity.

The person chiefly responsible for the translation and reform of the old services was Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, who fortunately brought to the task rare common sense, a spirit of comprehensiveness, a wide knowledge of liturgical forms and a genius unsurpassed for the language of devotion — a genius which places him in the very front rank of the great names in English literature.

In considering the immediate sources of the Prayer Book, we shall confine our study to those services which are most frequently used, and with which we are, presumably, most familiar: namely, Morning and Evening Prayer and the Holy Communion.

## I

### MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

The chief sources of Morning and Evening Prayer are (1) the Bible, and (2) the Sarum Breviary.

The Sarum Breviary was the medieval Latin Service Book, according to the use of Salisbury, containing the "Hour Services," that is, those services of prayer and praise which had developed from the primitive practice of private prayer at certain fixed hours in the day, a practice which goes back to Judaism. In some Christian communities this seems to have developed by the end of the second century into daily public prayer in the morning and evening and, on certain occasions, at midnight. By the end of the fourth century, these services had been given more or less definite form in monastic communities, and other services at the third, sixth, and ninth hours (that is, 9 A.M., Noon, and 3 P.M.) had been added. Later another service was said before the morning business meeting of the monks, and one at bedtime. Hence, in the monasteries of the early Middle Ages we find seven services from dawn to bedtime, and one at midnight. They consisted of psalms, Scripture, versicles and responses, and collects or short prayers.

From the monasteries their use spread among the secular, or non-monastic, clergy, where, instead of being said at their appointed hours, they were gradually grouped together so that the midnight service and the first five of the day were all said at one time in the morning, and the two evening services at one time in the evening. They had,



meanwhile, undergone constant elaboration, and much variable material, changing with the day and season of the Church Year, had been added. They were, in the sixteenth century, long, intricate, complicated, impossible for the laity and difficult for the clergy to follow. As Cranmer in the preface to the first English Prayer Book put it,

“The number and hardness of the rules . . . and the manifold changings of the service, was the cause that to turn the book only, was so hard and intricate a matter that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out.”

There was a general desire, even before the Reformation, for the simplification of these services. There was also a feeling that, except for the psalms, which were repeated in them once a week, the Scriptures were unduly neglected. In the seven daytime services the Scripture reading consisted of a single verse. In Nocturns (the original midnight service) also called Matins (since it was now said in the morning) there were sometimes three lessons, sometimes nine, some of which were from the Bible, but the bulk of them were from medieval lives of the saints. Such was the prominence given to these miraculous and uncritical stories that the phrase “to lie like a second Nocturn” became a proverb.

Pope Clement VII, seeing the need of a reform of the Breviary, requested Cardinal Quignon, a Spanish Franciscan, to undertake it. In his reformed Breviary, published in 1535, the hour services were simplified and the number of lessons from the legends of the saints drastically reduced. From this Cranmer received many suggestions, but he went much further in that he accepted the prevailing practice of reading the services in two groups, morning and

evening, and frankly reduced them to two services. He cut out all lessons from the lives of the saints, had two lessons from Scripture in the morning, and two in the evening, and so arranged them that practically the whole Bible would be read through once a year, and the New Testament thrice. He likewise provided for the continuous reading or singing of the psalter so that all the psalms would be used each month. His scheme assumed that these services would be said daily, not merely on Sundays.

Apart from psalms and Bible lections, the rest of Morning Prayer was composed of the chief parts of the first three medieval daily services, Nocturns (or Matins), Lauds, and Prime. From Nocturns were taken the chants known as the Venite and the Te Deum, from Lauds the Benedicite and the Benedictus as well as the collect for the day and the collect for peace, from Prime the Apostles' Creed and the collect for grace.<sup>1</sup>

In the same way Evening Prayer was a combination of the two medieval evening services, Vespers and Compline.

Thus of the two sources of Morning and Evening Prayer — the Bible and the Breviary — the Bible was brought into the services practically in its entirety, while a good deal of the Breviary was not used at all. In other words, the services of Morning and Evening Prayer in their general outline and their use of certain chants or canticles preserve their continuity with the medieval services, and in their large use of Scripture they witness to the Reformers'

<sup>1</sup> To say that these parts of the service were taken from the medieval services does not mean that they were composed in medieval times. Most of them are very ancient. The Venite is Psalm 95; the Te Deum is a Latin hymn composed about 400 A.D.; the Benedicite is the song put into the mouth of the companions of Daniel in the fiery furnace in the Greek version of the Old Testament; the Benedictus is from the first chapter of St. Luke. The evening chants in the first Prayer Book (Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis) are both from the New Testament.

endeavor to revive pre-medieval and primitive Christian custom.

At the same time it should be noted that the use of the Bible in the Prayer Book was a discriminating use and one which avoided the pit into which so many Protestant bodies have fallen, of regarding all Scripture, whether it be a genealogy from the Pentateuch or a parable of our Lord, as of equal importance. With his characteristic good sense, Cranmer wrote in his direction concerning the use of Scripture:

“The Old Testament shall be read through every year once, except certain books and chapters which be least edifying, and might best be spared, and therefore are left unread.”

Much of the apocalypse was also left unread, but the fact that the rest of the New Testament was to be read through thrice to the Old Testament's once, and that the ancient custom was retained of using special portions of the epistles and gospels at the Holy Communion and of honoring the reading of the gospels with peculiar ceremony, indicates the extent to which this wise discrimination between the various parts of Scripture was carried.

Morning and Evening Prayer, then, in the first Prayer Book, consisted of the Lord's Prayer, versicles, Venite (in Morning Prayer only), psalms, two readings from Scripture, each followed by a chant, then the Creed, Lord's Prayer repeated, versicles, and three collects or short prayers.

This has remained the nucleus of the service ever since (except for the omission of the second Lord's Prayer in the American Prayer Book), but additions have been made to both ends, most of which seem to have been the result of a

change in the conception of what the place and purpose of Morning and Evening Prayer were. Originally, brief daily services, of secondary importance to the Holy Communion, they came to be looked on as the chief Sunday services.

The additions at the opening of the service came in the second Prayer Book (1552). They consisted of sentences from Scripture, Exhortation, General Confession and Absolution. Their use was probably suggested by the services of French and German reformed congregations then in England, but the form in which we have them was original with the second Prayer Book. At the other end of the service the revision of 1661 placed an anthem, four additional prayers taken from the Litany, and the Grace. The American Prayer Book of 1789 added, likewise by transfer from another part of the book, the prayer for all Sorts and Conditions of Men and the General Thanksgiving. It omitted altogether, however, the Athanasian Creed, which in the English Book is used at Morning Prayer on certain feast days.

The infrequent use of the service of Holy Communion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led to the further invariable addition to Morning Prayer of the introductory portion of the Communion Service, known as Ante-Communion, and Sermon. Custom added hymns, as it added hymns, Offertory and sermon to Evening Prayer.

Moreover, these services have often been made to seem much longer than they are by our permitting the choir to sing as anthems the chants or canticles originally intended to be sung to music simple enough for the congregation to join in.

There has fortunately been a recent reaction in favor of congregational singing of the canticles. There has also been, during the last two generations, a growing tendency to shorten both Morning and Evening Prayer. Englishmen



have long chafed under the rubric which requires the daily morning and evening use of Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution. As Ruskin put it, we pray in the morning that the rest of our lives may be pure and holy with the consciousness that a few hours later we shall be required to say that there is no health in us.

This was partly remedied in the American Book of 1892, when permission was given to omit Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution from Evening Prayer on week days. In the revision of 1922 they need only be used at Morning Prayer on Sundays and days of abstinence and then only if the Holy Communion is not to follow. On all other days and at all services of Evening Prayer, Sunday or week day, their use is now optional. The exhortation may always be shortened to a single sentence, and an admirable brief absolution taken from the Sarum Missal is given as an alternate form in Evening Prayer.<sup>1</sup>

The shortening at the other end of the service has come, first, from the more frequent celebration of the Holy Communion, resulting in the detachment of the Ante-Communion service from Morning Prayer. In perhaps the majority of our churches Holy Communion is now said early every Sunday morning, and is the chief later service on the first Sunday in the month. Thus Morning Prayer without Ante-Communion, but with sermon, remains in many places the chief service on three Sundays a month.

Thanks to the psychologists who assure us that the attention of few men and women can be profitably held by a service over an hour in length, we have devised further ways of condensation. In England in 1872 provision was

<sup>1</sup> This is now given in two forms, one, as adopted in 1922, the other, differing only slightly from the first, as proposed for adoption in place of the first. The second is much to be preferred for conciseness of expression as well as for liturgical correctness.

made for shortening Morning and Evening Prayer on week days by the omission of all but one of the appointed psalms, of one Scripture lesson, and of the prayers after the third collect at the end of the service. The American Revision of 1892 permitted the omission of the prayers after the third collect at Evening Prayer on Sundays as well as week days. The American Revision of 1922 has sanctioned shorter Scripture lessons, a single psalm, and the omission of the closing prayers at both Morning and Evening Prayer on both Sundays and week days. Moreover, provision is made for the use of the first half of Morning Prayer, that is, through the first lesson and the canticle following it, as a service preparatory to the Holy Communion. Hence instead of saying, as we once did, Morning Prayer plus Ante-Communion, we may now say Ante-Morning Prayer plus Communion.

In many places in America, custom, doubtless basing itself on the English precedent, has also provided for the omission of one lesson at Evening Prayer. It is hard to say why this has not been formally sanctioned in our revision of 1922.

Most of the proposals for Prayer Book revision put forward at present in England provide for optional shortening of Morning and Evening Prayer similar to that now permitted in America. Some English proposals go further and suggest alternate introductions in place of Confession and Absolution, the permissive omission of one lesson from any service, and the omission of the Creed, when the *Te Deum* is used, except on the greater festivals. The occasional use of the Beatitudes, arranged as versicles and responses, is also proposed.

What appear to the writer to be the most constructive suggestions for alternate uses are those made in "A New Prayer Book," popularly known, from the color of its bind-

ing, as "The Grey Book," compiled by a group of English clergymen representing all parties in the Church, and issued last year, with an introduction by Bishop Temple of Manchester.<sup>1</sup>

## II

### THE HOLY COMMUNION

The emphasis placed on Scripture by the reformers in the composition of Morning and Evening Prayer, is not so evident, nor was it so necessary, in the composition of the service of Holy Communion. For in the service of the Mass the medieval Church had for centuries read portions of the epistles and gospels.

In our Communion Service, as in Morning and Evening Prayer, the general medieval outline of the service is retained. Omissions and additions were made with the purpose of securing intelligent participation in the service by the worshipper, of increasing his devotion, and of making clear to him the intimate connection between religion and morality. At the same time certain doctrinal errors which had become attached to the service in the later Middle Ages were corrected.

The difficulty of the worshipper taking any intelligent part in a service said not only in the Latin tongue but also often in so low a voice that it could not be heard even if understood, had long been felt, and attempts had been made to remedy it, not by changing the language or the tone in which it was spoken but by supplying the laity with manuals of instruction and devotion in English. Thus the

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered when examining the English proposals for revision that they are not, strictly speaking, proposals for revision but rather for the adoption of alternate services. That is, the present services are to remain unchanged and alternate forms of service are to be adopted, which may be used, where preferred, in place of them.

devout could say their own prayers in the body of the church while the priests conducted service in the chancel. How far this was done is well illustrated in a letter from the Catholic Bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner, written to Cranmer while the old Latin services were still in use. Referring to the phrase "hearing Mass," he says:

"It is in speech so called hearing, but indeed nothing so practised, nor never was, . . . for in times past when men came to church, more diligently than some do now, the people in the church took small heed what the priests and clerks did in the chancel. . . . It was never meant the people should indeed hear the Matins or the Mass, but be present there and pray themselves in silence. And good simple folk were wont so to be, and other more dissolute used to commune in the time of Matins and Mass of other matters. And I have known that after their little devotions said . . . some used to gather by the penny or two pence such money as they had lent in gross. . . . And it is a common fashion to ask who preacheth, so the audience increaseth by the man who preacheth and not by the matter."

The first attempt to connect the worshipper more intimately with the Mass was made in 1548, the year before the publication of the first Prayer Book. Then appeared the "Order of the Holy Communion," consisting of a long exhortation to the worshippers to examine themselves before partaking of the communion, an invitation to them to partake of it if repentant, a general confession and absolution, sentences from Scripture known as "the Comfortable Words," sentences used in administering the communion, and the prayer known as "the Prayer of Humble Access." These were all in English and in substantially the same form as they later appeared in the Prayer Book. When



first issued, however, they were to be used as an insert in the Latin Mass, immediately after the priest's own communion, the Mass otherwise remaining unchanged.

This seems to have been suggested to Cranmer by a book setting forth principles of reform in doctrine and ceremonial issued in Germany by Hermann, the reforming Archbishop of Cologne, and known as "Hermann's Consultation." Cranmer, however, treated these suggestions with considerable freedom, using only a phrase from Hermann here and there, and practically composing anew in briefer and certainly more appropriate language these parts of our service.

For the rest of the service of Holy Communion as it appeared in the first Prayer Book, Cranmer followed the general scheme of the Latin Mass as found in the Sarum Missal, or Mass Book of Salisbury, which was widely used in England in the sixteenth century. This was closely akin to the Roman Missal, yet differing from it in several particulars, doubtless due to the influence of Gallican forms of service.

Thus in the first English Prayer Book Cranmer provided for the retention of the chief medieval vestments and the chief festivals and seasons of the Church Year, although he reduced the number of saints' days recognized by a special Collect, Epistle and Gospel, to twenty-one, retaining New Testament saints only.

From the Sarum Missal he took the opening prayers, the introit in a revised form, the ninefold Kyrie (Lord have mercy upon us, etc.), the Gloria in Excelsis, Collects, Epistles, Gospels, and the Nicene Creed. After the Creed he provided for a weekly sermon. This had been the customary place for sermons in the Mass, but in the later Middle Ages they had been given much less frequently than once a week.

Following the Missal he did not require the use of the Creed at all Masses. It might be omitted whenever there was a sermon or "for other great cause" at the discretion of the minister, and on all workdays. The same rule applied to the Gloria in Excelsis and the Long Exhortation. At the offertory he reintroduced the primitive custom of an offering of alms along with the offering of bread and wine.

Then came *Sursum Corda* (Lift up your hearts, etc.), and the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy, etc.), followed by a long prayer, containing what in our American Prayer Book we now know as the Prayer for the Church Militant and the Prayer of Consecration and Oblation. This corresponded to a series of prayers in the Mass which Cranmer treated freely, greatly improving upon them in arrangement, coherence and beauty of expression. For the Latin list of saints commemorated, he substituted the "most blessed Virgin Mary" and "the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs, whose examples, O Lord, and steadfastness in thy faith, and keeping thy holy commandments, grant us to follow." The faithful departed were prayed for.

In the portion of the prayer containing the consecration of the elements he made two important insertions. The first was the phrase asserting that Christ upon the cross "made there (by his one oblation once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." This was to correct the medieval belief that the sacrifice upon the cross was not sufficient for the sins of the whole world, that it only removed the guilt of original sin and that the sacrifice of the Mass was necessary to remove the guilt of all other sin. The second insertion was likewise indicative of the reformers' attempt to return to primitive Christian custom. This was a prayer that the bread and wine might be blessed by the Holy

Spirit. Such an invocation of the Holy Spirit had from very early times been regarded as the essential part of the prayer of consecration in the East, although there it always came after not before the words of consecration. For some inexplicable reason it had disappeared from the Latin Mass, and has never been replaced.

A further indication of reform was the rubric which forbade the elevation of the host or consecrated bread. This was to prevent that superstitious worship of the host which, in the sixteenth century had almost entirely replaced the reception of the communion by the worshippers. Indeed the normal practice throughout western Christendom on the eve of the Reformation was the reception of the communion by the laity once a year.

After the consecration came the Lord's Prayer as in the Missal, then the Invitation, Confession, Absolution, Comfortable Words, Prayer of Humble Access, and Words of Administration, as in the English insertion into the Latin Mass of the previous year. During the communion of the people, the *Agnus Dei* was sung. After a prayer of thanksgiving, the service closed with a benediction.

Although the English service, as here outlined, followed closely the order of the Mass and took over from it many of its parts, there were, at the same time, many things in the Mass which were not taken over. Almost all of the psalms and prayers in the priests' approach to the altar were dropped. The elaborate series of variable chants sung between Epistle and Gospel were omitted, and almost all of the variable short prayers, which, during the Middle Ages, had been gradually added at different parts of the service, were excised.

We have, therefore, in the Holy Communion Service of the first Prayer Book a simplified Mass plus (1) certain exhortations and prayers calculated to increase the devotion

of the worshipper, suggested by German reformed services; (2) the invocation of the Holy Spirit from Eastern liturgies; and (3) certain corrections of doctrinal corruptions.

Although the medieval service was thus simplified, it was correspondingly enriched by Cranmer's genius for liturgical language. Take for instance, the collect for the seventh Sunday after Trinity:

Lord of all power and might, which art the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We could not conceive of a prayer more simply yet more perfectly expressed than this, did we not know that for the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity:

Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve thee with a quiet mind.

Here we have conciseness, rhythm, poetry, — that surpassing clarity and simplicity which is of the essence of all great art.

But the first Prayer Book was translated not only by a supreme artist in the use of the English tongue, but by a scholar, with a scholar's comprehensiveness of spirit. That he always saw both sides of a question, and was at times too willing to doubt his own judgment in his appreciation of his opponents' point of view was a handicap to his career in the troublous days in which he lived, but it has proved an everlasting blessing to the book which he produced.

Comprehensiveness in his day was not a virtue easy of attainment. As he said himself,



“In this our time the minds of men be so diverse that some think it a great matter of conscience to depart from a piece of the least of their ceremonies, they be so addicted to their old customs, and . . . some be so newfangled that they would innovate all things.”

Of the two extremes here described, it was that addicted to the old with whom the first English Prayer Book found the more favor. Bishop Gardiner of Winchester, leader of the Catholic party, said that although he would not have made the book as it was, yet he would use it and see that it was used in his diocese, first, because he agreed with Cranmer that most rites and ceremonies were things indifferent and might be changed by the nation, and secondly, because the language of the Prayer Book contained nothing, to his mind, contrary to the true Catholic doctrine of the sacrament.

It was perhaps this very willingness of the Catholic leaders to accept the book which stirred the radical Protestants into opposition to it. Many of these, during the latter years of the reign of Henry VIII, when the Catholic (though anti-papal) party was in the ascendant, had fled to the Continent and had there imbibed the views of Zwingli and Calvin. They now returned, — to repeat Cranmer’s words, — “so newfangled that they would innovate all things.” Their attitude to the Prayer Book is summed up in a letter to the Swiss reformer Bullinger from John Hooper, who was soon to be made Bishop of Gloucester.

“We are laboring,” he wrote, “and struggling that the idol of the Mass be thrown out. It is no small hindrance to our exertions that the form which our . . . parliament . . . has prescribed for the whole realm [i. e., the first Prayer Book] is so very defective and of doubtful construction, and in some places indeed mani-

festly impious. I am so much offended with that book . . . that if it be not corrected, I neither can nor will communicate with the Church in the administration of the Lord's Supper."

The nobles who were governing, or rather misgoverning, England during the minority of the boy king Edward VI had little interest in religion but much in the lining of their own pockets. They threw their influence on the side of the radical reformers in order that zeal for apostolic simplicity might cover and excuse the spoliation of the Church. Extreme men were given bishoprics; Continental reformers put into professorships at Oxford and Cambridge; conservative bishops deprived and jailed. Under this pressure Cranmer was carried some distance in the radical direction, but not by any means the whole way. That, in the circumstances, so much of the first Prayer Book was retained in the second is perhaps more to be wondered at than that so much was altered.

In 1552 the second Prayer Book appeared. In it the service of the Holy Communion was very considerably revised.

In the first place the Commandments, each followed by an expanded form of the Kyrie, were added to the opening of the service as part of the people's preparation for the Communion. This was done with the commendable motive of connecting religion more closely with morality, and seems to have been suggested by similar uses in German reformed services.

There were several rearrangements of parts of the service, three of which have been generally commended by liturgical scholars. One is the transference of the Gloria in Excelsis from the beginning to the end of the service, where it appropriately follows the Prayer of Thanksgiving,

closing the service with a note of triumphant praise. The second is the placing of the Invitation, Confession and Absolution nearer the beginning of the service, where, as part of the preparation for the Communion, they properly belong. The third is the shifting of the prayer for the Church Militant from immediately before the Consecration to immediately after the Offertory. Whatever the motive for this shift, the new position is in accord with ancient Gallican usage, still to be seen in the Mozarabic Rite in Spain.

A fourth rearrangement which has not met with much approval was the detaching of the Prayer of Oblation from that of Consecration and placing it at the end of the service as an alternate thanksgiving. This and several other changes were due to radical partisanship. Indeed everything which Bishop Gardiner or other conservatives had approved in the first Prayer Book was taken out of the second.

The use of eucharistic vestments was forbidden. The commemoration of the Virgin Mary, patriarchs, prophets, saints and martyrs was omitted, as were all prayers for the departed. The word Altar was dropped, as was the word Mass, which had appeared in the subtitle of the Communion Office in the first Prayer Book. The Prayer of Humble Access, which in the first Prayer Book had come after the Consecration and which had been noted by Gardiner as a prayer in adoration of the sacrament, was removed to a place before the Consecration. Gardiner had found the Catholic doctrine of the sacrament in the words of the invocation of the Holy Spirit reading, "with thy Holy Spirit and word vouchsafe to bless and sanctify these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine that they may be unto us the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved Son." He had found the same doctrine in the sentences of administration:

"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee," etc., "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee," etc. In the second book the invocation of the Holy Spirit disappeared and the sentences of administration were replaced by the words, "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving," — words which were probably suggested by some of the Continental reformed services.

A rubric directed the people to receive the Communion kneeling. The Protestant extremists thought this savored of popery, and John Knox, at that time, strange to say, a clergyman in the Church of England, carried on such a vigorous campaign against the custom that the Privy Council requested Cranmer to change the rubric; to which he sensibly replied that since the people knelt immediately before and after the reception of the Communion it was absurd to receive it sitting. Moreover, he had no authority to change what Parliament had already accepted. Three days before the publication of the book, however, the Privy Council ordered the insertion of the so-called Black Rubric explaining that kneeling at the reception of the Communion did not and ought not imply any adoration of the sacramental bread and wine or of "any real and essential presence there . . . of Christ's natural flesh and blood."

Finally, the wise discretion permitted by the first book in the use of Gloria, Creed and Longer Exhortation gave place to the rigid and uniform use of them all at all communion services.

This second Prayer Book was first used November 1, 1552. King Edward died in the following July. With the accession of Mary, it went rapidly out of fashion. It was revived, however, at the accession of Elizabeth, but with



three significant changes, all in the direction of the first book:

(1) The use of the historic eucharistic vestments was again sanctioned, though as a matter of fact it was all the authorities could do to enforce the use of the surplice on many a Puritan preacher who looked on all vestments as "the ministering garments of the Pope's Church."

(2) The Black Rubric was omitted.

(3) The original words of administration, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc., were restored and prefixed to those of the second Book.

Subsequent English revisions have changed the service of Holy Communion very little, except that in 1661 a commemoration of the departed was reintroduced into the Prayer for the Church Militant. In the book prepared for use in Scotland in 1637, however, there was a return to the service of the first Prayer Book in so far as the Oblation, Lord's Prayer, and the Prayer of Humble Access all came after the Prayer of Consecration and before the Communion. After the first ill-fated attempt to use this book it remained unused till 1688, when it was revived by Scotch Episcopalians and English non-jurors. Between 1735 and 1764 various changes in it were made, all tending to bring its Communion Service into further harmony with that of 1549, to which was added, from the ancient liturgies of the East, an invocation of the Holy Spirit following the words of institution and oblation in the Prayer of Consecration. Practically all English liturgical scholars regard the Scotch Communion Office as superior not only to the present English Service, but also to that of 1549, as well as to the Sarum and Roman Missals.

When in 1784 Bishop Seabury of Connecticut, the first

American Bishop, was consecrated at Aberdeen, he engaged to try to persuade the Church in America to accept the Scotch Communion Service. In this he was successful in so far as the Scotch Prayer of Consecration, including the Oblation and Invocation of the Holy Spirit, as well as Christ's Summary of the Law, for use after the Commandments at the opening of the service, were adopted.

Our Prayer Book, however, did not follow the Scotch in placing the Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of Humble Access where they had appeared in the first English Prayer Book, namely, between the Consecration and the Communion. There is at present before our Church a proposal, which has the best liturgical precedent, to replace them there.

The first American Prayer Book also permitted the use of a hymn in place of the Gloria in Excelsis and the use of the Apostles' Creed in place of the Nicene. The Revision of 1892 provided for the omission of the Commandments at week day services and at all but one Sunday service, as well as for the omission of the Long Exhortation at all except one Sunday service a month.

We may now sum up the sources of our present American Service of Holy Communion. They indicate indeed a catholicity of origin:

(1) The general outline is from the English Prayer Book, which in turn is from the Sarum Missal, i. e., that form of the medieval Latin Mass most widely used in England.

(2) The Prayer of Consecration is from the Scotch Prayer Book, which in turn is from the first English Prayer Book plus the Invocation of the Holy Spirit from ancient Eastern liturgies, — more primitive than the Sarum or any Latin Missal.

(3) The use of the Commandments and the Exhortation, Confession, Absolution, Comfortable Words, and Prayer of Humble Access were suggested by analogous but not identical parts in the services of the German reformers.

(4) The recomposition of these parts of the service as well as of many parts from the Missal, the position of the Gloria in Excelsis, the presentation of alms as well as of bread and wine at the Offertory, the emphasis on instruction in the weekly sermon, the correction of certain erroneous doctrines and practices, and the all important matter of language, — that we have the service in our own tongue, — are the contributions of the English reformers, especially Cranmer.

(5) Several permissive variations and omissions, giving greater flexibility and freedom in the use of the service, have so far been the chief contributions of America. They are likely to be increased if the proposals for further revision, tentatively accepted by the General Convention of 1922, be adopted in 1925.

The chief of these proposed variations are as follows:

(1) The Long Exhortation need be said only on three Sundays in the year.

(2) The Commandments need be said only on one Sunday a month, and then they may be used in their shortened form — that is, without the long explanatory portions of the second and fourth, which, because of their reference to the jealousy of God and the creation of the world in six days have been a stumbling block to the faithful and the intelligent.

(3) A hymn may be sung between Epistle and Gospel, — a return to the medieval custom of singing the Gradual at this point.

(4) A hymn or the Agnus Dei may be sung at the Communion.

Commendable as these permissive variations are, it is noteworthy that the first English Prayer Book gave greater freedom in the optional use of certain parts of the service than does our proposed revision of today. Since we are returning to the first Prayer Book in so much else, we might well follow it also in its wise direction as to the use of Gloria, Exhortation, and Creed. Certainly there is need for these and other permissive omissions in order to have a considerably shorter service for use on week days and on days when there are several celebrations. Here again, the Grey Book, to which attention has already been called, as well as the Orange Book issued by the Alcuin Club, contain suggestions well worth our consideration.

A word may not be out of place as to the ceremonial with which the Communion Service is conducted, for the effectiveness of any liturgy in giving expression to the religious aspirations of the congregation depends much on the ceremonial with which it is used.

Dignity and simplicity are the two essentials, but dignity is too often identified with tawdry display and simplicity with slovenliness. As a general rule our clergy have been negligent students of ceremonial, the low churchman ignorantly supposing that all ceremony is a concoction of meaningless frills and therefore disdaining all knowledge of it, the high churchman ignorantly taking it where he most easily found it, — in modern Romanism, not suspecting that many of the externals of modern Romanism are products of an era which has been aptly characterized by Professor Leighton Pullan as one "which valued gilded stucco."

It may perhaps be added that throughout the entire history of the English Prayer Book, there have been additional public services, not found in the book, authorized for use on various occasions by diocesan authority. The present tendency in most suggested revisions — especially those coming from English churchmen — is a request for still greater liberty in the use of additional services for special occasions, in which a wide range of liturgical choice will be permitted, plus opportunity for extempore prayer, and for such periods of silence as the Quakers have found helpful. Perhaps we do not see so many suggestions for official revision of the Prayer Book in this direction in America because our clergy already assume that the use of special services, extempore prayer and periods of silent worship is a liberty which is theirs by right of custom.



## NOTES ON READING

### I. HISTORIES OF THE PRAYER BOOK

- P. Dearmer, *Everyman's History of the Prayer Book* (American Edition), Milwaukee, 1915. An excellent brief popular treatment.
- S. Hart, *The Book of Common Prayer*, Sewanee 1913. Readable, fair, accurate and not too long.
- Proctor and Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, London, 1914.
- Neil and Willoughby, *The Tutorial Prayer Book*, London, 1913.

Each of the two last named books sets forth the facts in detail; the first tends to interpret them from the high-Anglican, the second from the Protestant-Evangelical standpoint. The second has no section on the American Prayer Book.

The first and second Prayer Books of Edward VI are to be had in a single volume of the Everyman's Library.

### II. PRAYER BOOK REVISION

- The Proposed Revision of the Book of Common Prayer*, Milwaukee, 1923. An indispensable booklet, showing changes in the American Prayer Book adopted in 1922, and those proposed for adoption in 1925.
- F. C. Eeles, *Prayer Book Revision and Christian Reunion*, Cambridge, 1923. An admirable brief discussion of the proposed revision in England, not inapplicable to American conditions.
- A Survey of the Proposals for the Alternate Prayer Book*, Alcuin Club, London and Milwaukee, 1923-24. Known as the *Orange Book*.

A *New Prayer Book*, with Foreword by the Bishop of Manchester, Oxford Univ. Press, 1923. Known as the *Grey Book*.

Of the many suggested revisions now put forth in England, these two, the Orange and Grey Books, seem to the present writer to be by far the best. We in America can learn much from them. Even apart from the question of revision, the Grey Book should prove of great value to us in the large number of new short services for occasional use which it contains. The liturgical principles underlying its proposals are published separately in the *Grey Book Pamphlets*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1923-24.

*The Order of Divine Service*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1919. This is not a proposed Prayer Book revision, but a book of services, edited by W. E. Orchard, for use in the Free Churches. It contains so many fine prayers, litanies and special services, and follows so closely the best liturgical tradition that it deserves to be widely known.

### III. THE USE OF THE PRAYER BOOK

- P. Dearmer, *The Art of Public Worship*, London and Milwaukee, 1919. A book which should be read and pondered by everyone interested in the effective conduct of our services.
- A *Directory of Ceremonial*, Alcuin Club Tract No. XIII, London and Milwaukee, 1921. Practically the only book of its kind based on sound liturgical knowledge and not on an unintelligent aping of Rome.











